

# Introduction to Proceedings

by Amy Larson  
Conference Chairperson  
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**O**n behalf of the Board of Directors of the International Oak Society, it is my privilege to introduce the Proceedings of the Second International Oak Conference. This conference was held on October 21-23, 1997 at the beautiful Huntington Botanical Gardens and Library in San Marino, California, USA.

The International Oak Society, the Huntington, the California Oak Foundation, and the University of California Cooperative Extension were honored to host more than 100 people from 12 countries — possibly the largest and most diverse group of oak experts and enthusiasts ever assembled in the world. Participants enjoyed oral presentations, a poster session, the triennial seed exchange, a wine tasting from oak barrels, and a presentation on oak lore. Those who opted to take a field trip traveled by land and/or by sea to study native California oaks and collect their seeds.

From its humble beginnings as an informal seed exchange organization, the International Oak Society has grown to more than 500 members from nearly three dozen nations. The Society began to formalize itself at the First International Oak Conference, which was held in 1994 at the Morton Arboretum in Illinois. An interim Board of Directors, elected by the membership, incorporated the International Oak Society and obtained its nonprofit organization status.

Why all this fanfare around oaks? Traditionally, people went into forests to hunt and gather food and to celebrate the abundant resources that the forests provide. Today, International Oak Society members collectively study *Quercus* throughout the world; collect, exchange, propagate, and cultivate oak seeds; and share information about this diverse genus with one another and the botanical community. These activities are dwarfed, however, by the deep and global connections made between people, both personally and professionally, through the love of oaks.

It is this human perspective of our organization that is most critical. Sadly, forests and woodlands in many parts of the world — to their detriment — are being over-harvested for wood products and are being cleared

for development or agriculture. Oak Society members recently helped rally support for a local initiative to protect oaks in Santa Barbara County, California. We hope that the International Oak Society and its many members will continue to spearhead efforts to preserve and enhance oaks throughout the world, and catalyze public opinion on issues related to oaks and oak conservation.

In the meantime, I invite you to go into an oak forest, and, for a change, do nothing. Stand

still. Listen to water droplets falling into streams trickling into rivers, bays, and oceans. Remember that these forests filter our water and provide sustenance. Breathe the fresh air deep into your lungs. Be cool. Imagine all of the people who for centuries have felt renewed by doing absolutely nothing under a tree.

Be proud of your efforts on behalf of oaks.

I would like to acknowledge these helping hands to the Second International Oak Conference ...

## **Recognition and Thank You**

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- Jim Folsom, Director
  - Jerry Turney
  - Kathy Musial
  - Danielle Rudeen
  - Peggy Kelley
  - Evie Cutting
  - Fernando Montes de Oca
- ...and everyone at the Huntington who made this conference possible.

*California Oak Foundation* -  
*Conference Registration*

- Deborah Reid
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- Hale Guerra

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### **Seed Exchange**

- William Hess
- Guy Sternberg

### **Volunteers**

- Kevin Casey
- Miles A. Cobb
- David Reid
- Jochen Schenck
- Mitch Weltbach

...and all of our presenters and those who contributed seeds to the seed exchange.

Amy Larson - Conference Chairperson  
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